THE ORTHODOX WORD

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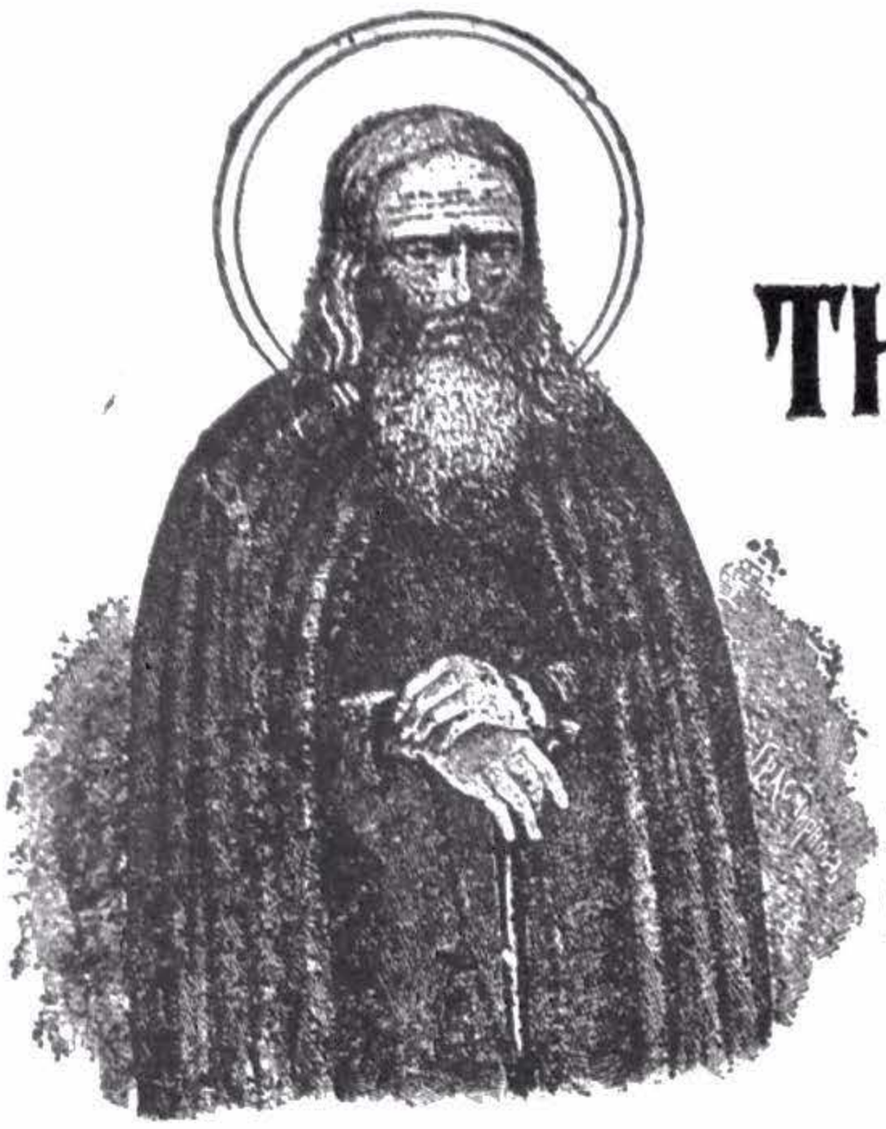
Christianity vs. Sorcery



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COVER: St. Cyprian the Former Sorcerer. This, the color icon on page 137, and illustrations on pages 151-2 and 157-8 (Icons are from the Monastery's Icon-painting workshop), courtesy of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina, Fili, Attica, Greece.

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Christianity vs. Sorcery

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, which began with the presumption of imagining itself the most enlightened of all ages, has in reality proceeded through some of the blackest years of all human history. Symptomatic of this truly dark age is the revival in recent decades of interest and active participation in witchcraft and sorcery. Much of this interest is on the level of dilettantism and crude amateurism, but more and more often it produces real results, leads to an actual contact with demonic powers, and causes the eternal damnation of souls caught in the web of nets far more subtle and deadly than the beginning occultist imagines.

All this is not new to Orthodox Christians. In the history of the world's religions there is a whole tradition of sorcery — the service of the pagan gods, which are demons (Psalm 95:5). This is the religious tradition which Christianity replaced in all lands that accepted the Gospel, and which now comes back in power to destroy Christianity and to conduct mankind to Antichrist.

The Life of Sts. Cyprian and Justina gives one of the fullest accounts in Christian literature of sorcery and its power over men — and its final defeat by the power of Christ. It is not the product of someone's imagination, but is based on the first-hand testimony of one who was a leading servant of the demons himself.

Let Orthodox Christians read and become sober, and resolve with the more firmness and determination to work out their salvation against the powers of darkness in fear and trembling. And let him who has in his heart even a spark of repentance take courage and hope, for this Life is also the surest proof that God's mercy is stretched out even to the most lost of souls. If the sorcerer Cyprian could be saved and become a mighty intercessor for the demon-possessed, then there is hope for those also who even now have fallen into the darkest and most unnatural sins of our dark age.

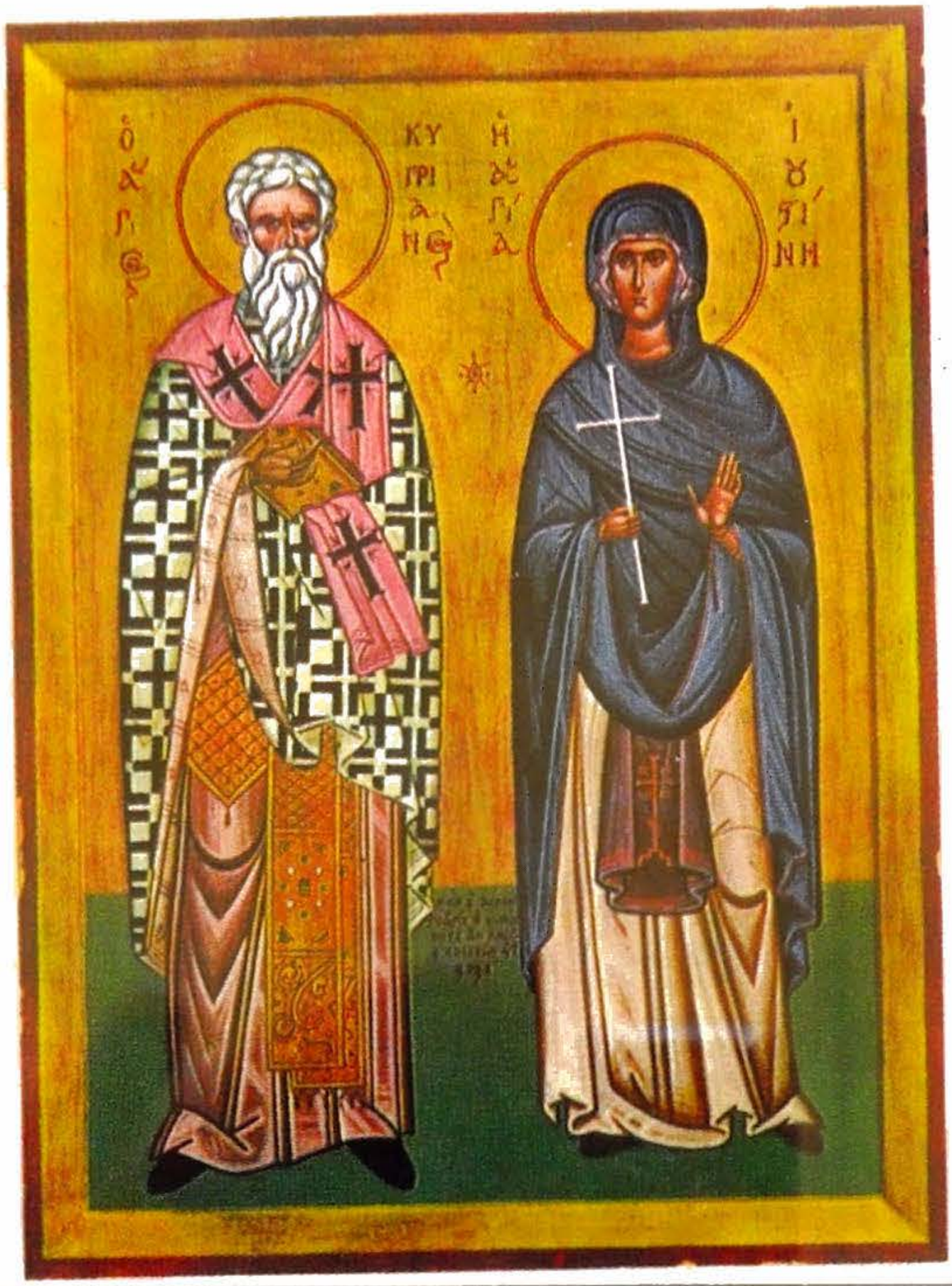
The Life and Sufferings of the Holy Martyrs *CYPRIAN and JUSTINA*

Translated from the Russian *Lives of Saints,* Moscow, 1904

IN THE REIGN of Decius (249-251) there lived in Antioch (of Pisidia) a certain philosopher and renowned sorcerer whose name was Cyprian, a native of Carthage. Springing from impious parents, in his very childhood he was dedicated by them to the service of the pagan god Apollo. At the age of seven he was given over to magicians for the study of sorcery and demonic wisdom. At the age of ten he was sent by his parents, as a preparation for a sorcerer's career, to Mount Olympus, which the pagans called the dwelling of the gods. Here there were a numerous multitude of idols, in which demons dwelled.

On this mountain Cyprian studied all manner of diabolical arts: he mastered various demonic transformations, learned how to change the nature of the air, to bring up winds, produce thunder and rain, disturb the waves of the sea, cause damage to gardens, vineyards and fields, to send diseases and plagues upon people; and in general he learned a ruinous wisdom and diabolical activity filled with evil. In this place he saw a numberless legion of demons, with the prince of darkness at their head; some stood before him, others served him, still others cried out in praise of their prince, and some were sent into the world in order to corrupt people. Here he likewise saw in their false forms the pagan gods and goddesses, and also diverse phantoms and specters, the invocation of which he learned in a strict forty-day fast. He ate only after the setting of the sun, and not bread or anything else, but only acorns from oak trees.

When he was fifteen years old he began to receive lessons from seven great sorcerers; from them he learned many demonic secrets. Then he went to the city of Argos, where, having served the goddess Juno for a time, he



STS. CYPRIAN AND JUSTINA

COMMEMORATED OCTOBER 2

Kontakion, Tone 1

Thou wast converted from the art of sorcery, O divinely wise one,* to the knowledge of God,* and wast manifested to the world as a most wise physician,* granting healing to those who honor thee, O Cyprian together with Justina.* With her, then, entreat the Master, the Lover of mankind,* that He may save our souls.

learned many practices of deception from her priests. He lived also in Taurapolis (on the island of Icara) in the service of the goddess Diana; and from there he went to Sparta, where he learned how to call forth the dead from the graves and to force them to speak by means of various incantations and spells. At the age of twenty, Cyprian came to Egypt, and in the city of Memphis he learned yet greater charms and incantations. In his thirtieth year he went to the Chaldeans, and having learned astrology there, he finished his studies. After this he returned to Antioch, being perfect in all evil-doing. Thus he became a sorcerer, magician, and destroyer of souls, a great friend and faithful slave of the prince of hell, with whom he conversed face to face, being vouchsafed to receive from him great honor, as he himself testified.

"Believe me," he said; "I have seen the prince of darkness himself, for I propitiated him by sacrifices. I greeted him and spoke with him and his ancients; he liked me, praised my understanding, and before everyone said: 'Here is a new Jambres, always ready for obedience and worthy of communion with us!' And he promised to make me a prince after my departure from the body, and for the course of earthly life to help me in everything. And he gave me a legion of demons to serve me. When I departed from him, he addressed me with these words: 'Take courage, fervent Cyprian; arise and accompany me; let all the demonic ancients marvel at you.' Consequently, all of his princes also were attentive to me, seeing the honor shown to me. The outward appearance of the prince of darkness was like a flower. His head was crowned by a crown (not an actual, but a phantom one) made of gold and brilliant stones, as a result of which the whole space around him was illuminated; and his clothing was astonishing. When he would turn to one or the other side, that whole place would tremble; a multitude of evil spirits of various degrees stood obediently at his throne. I gave myself over entirely into his service at that time, obeying his every command." Thus did St. Cyprian relate of himself after his conversion.

From this it is evident what kind of man Cyprian was: as a friend of the demons, he performed all their works, causing evil to people and deceiving them. Living in Antioch, he turned many people away to every kind of lawless deed; he killed many with poisons and magic, and slaughtered young men and maidens as sacrifices for the demons. He instructed many in his ruinous sorcery: some he taught to fly in the air, others to sail in boats on the clouds, still others to walk on water. By all the pagans he was revered and glorified as a chief priest and most wise servant of their vile gods. Many turned to him in

their needs, and he helped them by means of the demonic power with which he was filled: with some he cooperated in their adulteries, with others in anger, enmity, revenge, jealousy. Already he was entirely in the depths of hell and in the jaws of the devil; he was a son of gehenna, a partaker of the demonic inheritance and of their eternal perdition. But the Lord, who does not desire the death of a sinner, in His unutterable goodness and His mercy which is not conquered by the sins of men, deigned to seek out this lost man, to draw out of the abyss one who was mired in the filth of the depths of hell, and to save him in order to show to all men His mercy; for there is no sin which can conquer His love of mankind.

He saved Cyprian from perdition in the following way.

THERE LIVED AT THAT TIME in Antioch a certain maiden whose name was Justina. She came from pagan parents; her father was a priest of the idols, Aedesius by name, and her mother was called Cledonia. Once, sitting at the window of her house, this maiden, who had then already reached womanhood, by chance heard the words of salvation out of the mouth of a deacon who was passing by, whose name was Praylius. He spoke of our Lord Jesus Christ's becoming man, that He had been born of the Most Pure Virgin and, having performed many miracles, had deigned to suffer for the sake of our salvation, had risen from the dead with glory, ascended into the heavens, and sits at the right hand of the Father and reigns eternally. This preaching of the deacon fell on good soil, into the heart of Justina, and began quickly to bring forth fruit, uprooting in her the thorns of unbelief. Justina wished to be instructed in the Faith by this deacon better and more completely, but she did not dare to seek him out, being restrained by a maiden's modesty. However, she secretly went to the church of Christ, and often hearing the word of God, with the Holy Spirit acting in her heart, she came to believe in Christ.

Soon she convinced her mother of this also, and then brought to the faith her aged father as well. Seeing the understanding of his daughter and hearing her wise words, Aedesius reflected within himself thus: "The idols are made by the hands of men and have neither soul nor breath, and therefore how can they be gods?" While he was reflecting on this, once at night he saw during sleep, by Divine consent, a wondrous vision: he saw a great multitude of light-bearing Angels, and in their midst was the Saviour of the world, Christ, Who said to him: "Come to Me, and I will give you the Kingdom of Heaven."

After rising in the morning, Aedesius went with his wife and daughter to the Christian Bishop, whose name was Optatus, begging him to instruct them in the Faith of Christ and to perform upon them holy Baptism. At the same time he informed him of the words of his daughter and of the angelic vision which he had seen himself. Hearing this, the Bishop rejoiced at their conversion, and having instructed them in the Faith of Christ, he baptized Aedesius, his wife Cledonia, and their daughter Justina; and then, having given them communion of the Holy Mysteries, he let them go in peace.

When Aedesius had become strengthened in the Faith of Christ, the Bishop, seeing his piety, made him a presbyter. After this, having lived virtuously and in the fear of God for a year and six months, Aedesius in holy faith came to the end of his life. As for Justina, she valiantly struggled in the keeping of the Lord's commandments, and having come to love her Bridegroom Christ, she served Him with fervent prayers, in virginity and chastity, in fasting and great abstinence. But the enemy, the hater of the human race, seeing such a life, envied her virtues and began to do harm to her, causing various misfortunes and sorrows.

AT THAT TIME there lived in Antioch a certain youth named Aglaias, the son of wealthy and renowned parents. He lived luxuriously, giving himself entirely over to the vanity of this world. Once he saw Justina as she was going to church, and he was struck by her beauty. The devil instilled shameful intentions into his heart. Being inflamed with lust, Aglaias by all means strove to gain the good disposition and love of Justina and by means of deception to bring the pure lamb of Christ to the defilement which he planned. He observed all the paths by which the maiden would walk, and, meeting her, would speak to her cunning words, praising her beauty and glorifying her; showing his love for her, he strove to draw her into fornication by a cunningly-woven net of deceptions. The maiden, however, turned away from him and fled from him, despising him and not desiring even to hear his deceptive and cunning speeches. But the youth did not grow cool in his desire of her beauty, and he sent to her the request that she should agree to become his wife.

She, however, replied to him: "My Bridegroom is Christ; Him I serve, and for His sake I preserve my purity. He preserves both my soul and my body from every defilement."

Hearing such a reply from the chaste maiden, Aglaias, being instigated by the devil, became yet more inflamed with passion. Not being able to deceive her, he intended to seize her by force. Having gathered to his aid some foolish youths like himself, he waylaid the maiden in the path along which she usually walked to church for prayer; there he met her and, seizing her, began dragging her by force to his house. But she began loudly to scream, beat him in the face, and spat on him. The neighbors, hearing her wails, ran out of their houses and took the immaculate lamb, St. Justina, from the hands of the impious youth as from the jaws of a wolf. The disorderly youths scattered, and Aglaias returned with shame to his house. Not knowing what more to do, he decided, with the increase of impure lust in him, upon a new evil deed: he went to the great sorcerer and magician Cyprian, the priest of the idols, and having informed him of his sorrow, begged his help, promising to give him much gold and silver. Having heard out Aglaias, Cyprian comforted him, promising to fulfill his desire. "I will so manage," he said, "that the maiden herself will seek your love and will feel passion for you even stronger than that which you have for her."

Having thus consoled the youth, Cyprian let him go, full of hope. Then, taking the books of his secret art, he invoked one of the impious spirits who, he was sure, could soon inflame the heart of Justina with passion for this youth. The demon willingly promised to fulfill this and proudly said: "This deed is not difficult for me, because many times I have shaken cities, crumbled walls, destroyed houses, caused the shedding of blood and patricide, instilled hatred and great anger between brothers and spouses, and have brought to sin many who have given a vow of virginity. In monks who have settled in mountains and were accustomed to strict fasting and have never even thought about the flesh, I have instilled adulterous lust and instructed them to serve fleshly passions; people who have repented and turned away from sin, I have converted back to evil deeds; many chaste people I have thrown into fornication. Will I really be unable to incline this maiden to the love of Aglaias? Indeed, why do I speak? I will swiftly show my powers in very deed. Take this powder" (here he gave him a vessel full of something) "and give it to this youth; let him sprinkle the house of Justina with it, and you will see that what I have said will come to pass."

Having said this, the demon vanished. Cyprian called Aglaias and sent him to sprinkle the house of Justina secretly with the contents of the demon's vessel. When this had been done, the demon of fornication entered the house

with the flaming arrows of fleshly lust in order to wound the heart of the maiden with fornication, and to ignite her flesh with impure lust.

Justina had the custom every night to offer up prayers to the Lord. And behold, when, according to custom, she arose at the third hour of the night and was praying to God, she suddenly felt an agitation in her body, a storm of bodily lust and the flame of the fire of gehenna. In such agitation and inward battle she remained for quite a long time; the youth Aglaias came to her mind, and shameful thoughts arose in her. The maiden marvelled and was ashamed of herself, feeling that her blood was boiling as in a kettle; now she thought about that which she had always despised as vile. But in her good sense Justina understood that this battle had arisen in her from the devil; immediately she turned to the weapon of the sign of the cross, hastened to God with fervent prayer, and from the depths of her heart cried out to Christ her Bridegroom: "O Lord, my God, Jesus Christ! Behold how many enemies have risen up against me and have prepared a net in order to catch me and take away my soul. But I have remembered Thy name in the night and have rejoiced, and now when they are close about me I hasten to Thee and have hope that my enemy will not triumph over me. For thou knowest, O Lord my God, that I, Thy slave, have preserved for Thee the purity of my body and have entrusted my soul to Thee. Preserve Thy sheep, O good Shepherd; do not give it over to be eaten by the beast who seeks to devour me; grant me victory over the evil desire of my flesh."

Having prayed long and fervently, the holy virgin put the enemy to shame. Being conquered by her prayer, he fled from her with shame, and again there came a calm in Justina's body and heart; the flame of desire was quenched, the battle ceased, the boiling blood was stilled. Justina glorified God and sang a song of victory.

The demon, on the other hand, returned to Cyprian with the sad news that he had accomplished nothing. Cyprian asked him why he had not been able to conquer the maiden. The demon, even against his will, revealed the truth: "I could not conquer her because I saw on her a certain sign of which I was afraid."

Then Cyprian called a yet more malicious demon and sent him to tempt Justina. He went and did much more than the first one, falling upon the maiden with great rage. But she armed herself with fervent prayer and laid

(*Continued on page* 167)

The Royal Path

TRUE ORTHODOXY IN AN AGE OF APOSTASY

As the Fathers say, the extremes from both sides are equally harmful . . . (We must) go on the royal path, avoiding the extremes on both sides.

St. John Cassian, Conference II

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS live today in one of the great critical times in the history of Christ's Church. The enemy of man's salvation, the devil, attacks on all fronts and strives by all means not merely to divert believers from the path of salvation shown by the Church, but even to conquer the Church of Christ itself, despite the Saviour's promise (Matt. 16:18), and to convert the very Body of Christ into an "ecumenical" organization preparing for the coming of his own chosen one, Antichrist, the great world-ruler of the last days.

Of course, we know that this attempt of Satan will fail; the Church will be the Bride of Christ even to the end of the world and will meet Christ the Bridegroom at His Second Coming pure and undefiled by adulterous union with the apostasy of this age. But the great question of our times for all Orthodox Christians to face is a momentous one: the Church will remain, but how many of us will still be in it, having withstood the devil's mighty attempts to draw us away from it?

Our times are much like those of St. Mark of Ephesus in the 15th century, when it seemed that the Church was about to be dissolved into the impious

Union with the Latins. Nay, our times are even worse and more dangerous than those times; for then the Union was an act imposed by force from without, while now the Orthodox people have been long prepared for the approaching "ecumenical" merger of all churches and religions by decades of laxness, indifference, worldliness, and indulgence in the ruinous falsehood that "nothing really separates us" from all others who call themselves Christians. The Orthodox Church survived the false Union of Florence, and even knew a time of outward prosperity and inward spiritual flourishing after that; but after the new false Union, now being pursued with ever-increasing momentum, will Orthodoxy exist at all save in the catacombs and the desert?

During the past ten years and more, under the disastrous "ecumenical" course pursued by Patriarch Athenagoras and his successor, the Orthodox Churches have already come perilously close to total shipwreck. The newest "ecumenical" statement of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, "The Thyateira Confession" (see *The Orthodox Word,* Jan.-Feb., 1976), is already sufficient evidence of how far the Orthodox conscience has been lost by the Local Church that once was first among the Orthodox Churches in the confession of Christ's truth; this dismal document only shows how close the hierarchs of Constantinople have now come to being absorbed into the heterodox "Christianity" of the West, even before the formal Union which is still being prepared.

THE ROOTS of today's ecumenism in the Orthodox Churches go back to the renovationism and modernism of certain hierarchs in the 1920's. In the Russian Church, these currents produced, first, the "Living Church" movement which, with the help of the Communist regime, tried to overthrow Patriarch Tikhon and "reform" the Church in a radically Protestant manner, and then—as a more "conservative" successor to the "Living Church"—the Sergianist church organization (the Moscow Patriarchate), which emphasized at first the political side of reconciliation with Communist ideology and aims (in accordance with the infamous "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius in 1927), and only in recent decades has ventured once again into the realm of ecclesiastical renovationism with its active participation in the ecumenical movement. In the Greek Church the situation has been similar: the renovationist "Pan-Orthodox Council" of 1923, with its Protestant reforms inspired by Patriarch Meletios Metaxakis of sorry memory, proved to be too radical for the Orthodox world to accept, and the renovationists had to be satisfied with imposing a calendar reform on several of the non-Slavic Churches.

Large movements of protest opposed the reformers in both the Russian and Greek Churches, producing the deep divisions which exist until now in the Orthodox world. In the Russian Church, Sergianism was decisively rejected by very many of the bishops and faithful, led by Metropolitan Joseph of Petrograd; this "Josephite" movement later became organized to some extent and became known as the "True Orthodox Church." The history of this illegal "Catacomb" Church of Russia is, to this day, veiled in secrecy, but in the past few years a number of startling evidences of its present-day activities have come to light, leading to stern repressive measures on the part of the Soviet government. The name of its present chief hierarch (Metropolitan Theodosius) has become known, as has that of one of its ten or more bishops (Bishop Seraphim). In the Diaspora, the Russian Church Outside of Russia committed itself from the very beginning of Sergianism in 1927 to a firm anti-Sergianist position, and on numerous occasions it has expressed its solidarity with the True Orthodox Church in Russia, while refusing all communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. Its uncompromisingness and staunch traditionalism in this and other matters were not to the taste of several of the Russian hierarchs of Western Europe and America, who were more receptive to the "reform" currents in 20th-century Orthodoxy, and they separated themselves at various times from the Russian Church Outside of Russia, thus creating the present "jurisdictional" differences of the Russian Diaspora.

In Greece the movement of protest, by a similar Orthodox instinct, likewise took the name of "True Orthodox Christians." From the beginning in 1924 (when the calendar reform was introduced), this movement has been especially strong among the simple monks, priests and laymen of Greece; the first bishop to leave the State Church of Greece and join the movement was Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Florina, and today it continues its fully independent life and organization, comprising about one-fourth of all the Orthodox Christians of Greece, and perhaps one-half or more of all the monks and nuns. Although popularly known as the "old calendarists," the True Orthodox Christians of Greece stand for a staunch traditionalism in Orthodox life and thought in general, viewing the calendar question merely as a first stage and a touchstone of modernism and reformism.

As the "ecumenical" cancer eats more and more away at the remaining sound organs of the Orthodox Churches today, an increasing sympathy is being shown by the most sensitive members of the "official" Orthodox jurisdictions for the cause and the representatives of the anti-ecumenist, anti-reformist

Churches of Russia, Greece, and the Diaspora. Some, seeing the "official" jurisdictions as now irrevocably set on a course of anti-orthodoxy, are abandoning them as sinking ships and joining the ranks of the True Orthodox Christians; others, still hoping for the restoration of an Orthodox course in world Orthodoxy, think it enough for now to express sympathy for the True Orthodox Christians or to protest boldly against the "reformist" mentality in the official jurisdictions. The ten years of anti-ecumenist epistles of Metropolitan Philaret, Chief Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia, have struck a responsive chord within a number of the Orthodox Churches, even if the "official" response to them has been largely silence or hostility.

Today, more than at any other time in the 50-year struggle to preserve the Orthodox tradition in an age of apostasy, the voice of true and uncompromising Orthodoxy *could* be heard throughout the world and have a profound effect on the future course of the Orthodox Churches. Probably, indeed, it is already too late to prevent the renovationist "Eighth Ecumenical Council" and the "ecumenical" Union which lies beyond it; but perhaps one or more of the Local Churches may yet be persuaded to step back from this ruinous path which will lead to the final liquidation (as Orthodox) of those jurisdictions that follow it to the end; and in any case, individuals and whole communities can certainly be saved from this path, not to mention those of the heterodox who may still find their way into the saving enclosure of the true Church of Christ.

IT IS OF CRITICAL importance, therefore, that this voice be actually one of *true,* that is, *patristic* Orthodoxy. Unfortunately, it sometimes happens, especially in the heat of controversy, that basically sound Orthodox positions are exaggerated on one side, and misunderstood on the other, and thus an entirely misleading impression is created in some minds that the cause of true Orthodoxy today is a kind of "extremism," a sort of "right-wing reaction" to the prevailing "left-wing" course now being followed by the leaders of the "official" Orthodox Churches. Such a political view of the struggle for true Orthodoxy today is entirely false. This struggle, on the contrary, has taken the form, among its best representatives today — whether in Russia, Greece, or the Diaspora — of a return to the patristic path of *moderation,* a *mean* between extremes; this is what the Holy Fathers call the ROYAL PATH.

The teaching of this "royal path" is set forth, for example, in the tenth of St. Abba Dorotheus' *Spiritual Instructions,* where he quotes especially the Book of Deuteronomy: *Ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the*

left, but go by the royal path (Deut. 5:32, 17:11), and St. Basil the Great: "Upright of heart is he whose thought does not turn away either to excess or to lack, but is directed only to the mean of virtue." But perhaps this teaching is most clearly expressed by the great Orthodox Father of the 5th century, St. John Cassian, who was faced with a task not unlike our own Orthodox task today: to present the pure teaching of the Eastern Fathers to Western peoples who were spiritually immature and did not yet understand the depth and subtlety of the Eastern spiritual doctrine and were therefore inclined to go to extremes, either of laxness or over-strictness, in applying it to life. St. Cassian sets forth the Orthodox doctrine of the *royal path* in his Conference on "sober-mindedness" (or "discretion") — the Conference praised by St. John of the Ladder (Step 4:105) for its "beautiful and sublime philosophy":

"With all our strength and with all our effort we must strive by humility to acquire for ourselves the good gift of sober-mindedness, which can preserve us unharmed by excess from both sides. For, as the Fathers say, the extremes from both sides are equally harmful — both excess of fasting and filling the belly, excess of vigil and excessive sleep, and other excesses." Sober-mindedness "teaches a man to go on the royal path, avoiding the extremes on both sides: on the right side it does not allow him to be deceived by excessive abstinence, on the left side to be drawn into carelessness and relaxation." And the temptation on the "right side" is even more dangerous than that on the "left": "Excessive abstinence is more harmful than satiating oneself; because, with the cooperation of repentance, one may go over from the latter to a correct understanding, but from the former one cannot" (i.e., because pride over one's "virtue" stands in the way of the repentant humility that could save one). *(Conferences, II, chs. 16, 2, 17.)*

Applying this teaching to our own situation, we may say that the "royal path" of true Orthodoxy today is a mean that lies between the extremes of ecumenism nad reformism on the one side, and a "zeal not according to knowledge" (Rom. 10:2) on the other. True Orthodoxy does not go "in step with the times" on the one hand, nor does it make "strictness" or "correctness" or "canonicity" (good in themselves) an excuse for pharisaic self-satisfaction, exclusivism, and distrust, on the other. This true Orthodox moderation is not to be confused with mere luke-warmness or indifference, or with any kind of compromise between political extremes. The spirit of "reform" is so much in the air today that anyone whose views are moulded by the "spirit of the times" will regard true Orthodox moderation as close to "fanaticism," but anyone who

looks at the question more deeply and applies the patristic standard will find the royal path to be far from any kind of extremism. Perhaps no Orthodox teacher in our own days provides such an example of sound and fervent Orthodox moderation as the late Archbishop Averky of Jordanville; his numerous articles and sermons breathe the refreshing spirit of true Orthodox zealotry, without any deviation either to the "right" or to the "left," and with emphasis constantly on the *spiritual* side of true Orthodoxy. (See especially his article, "Holy Zeal," in *The Orthodox Word,* May-June, 1975.)

THE RUSSIAN CHURCH Outside of Russia has been placed, by God's Providence, in a very favorable position for preserving the "royal path" amidst the confusion of so much of 20th-century Orthodoxy. Living in exile and poverty in a world that has not understood the suffering of her people, she has focused her attention on preserving unchanged the faith which unites her people, and so quite naturally she finds herself a stranger to the whole ecumenical mentality, which is based on religious indifference and self-satisfaction, material affluence, and soulless internationalism. On the other hand, she has been preserved from falling into extremism on the "right side" (such as might be a declaration that the Mysteries of the Moscow Patriarchate are without grace) by her vivid awareness that the Sergianist church in Russia is *not free;* one can of course have no communion with such a body, dominated by atheists, but precise definitions of its status are best left to a free Russian church council in the future. If there seems to be a "logical contradiction" here ("if you don't deny her Mysteries, why don't you have communion with her?"), it is a problem only for rationalists; those who approach church questions with the heart as well as the head have no trouble accepting this position, which is the testament bequeathed to he Russian Church of the Diaspora by her wise Chief Hierarch, Metropolitan Anastassy (+1965).

Living in freedom, the Russian Church Outside of Russia has considered as one of her important obligations to express her solidarity and full communion with the underground True Orthodox Church of Russia, whose existence is totally ignored and even denied by "official" Orthodoxy. In God's time, when the terrible trial of the Russian Church and people will have passed, the other Orthodox Churches may understand the Russian Church situation better; until then, it is perhaps all one can hope for that the free Orthodox Churches have never questioned the right of the Russian Church Outside of Russia to exist or denied the grace of her Mysteries, almost all of them have long remained in communion with her (until her non-participation in the

ecumenical movement isolated her and made her a reproach to the other Churches, especially in the last decade), and up to this day they have (at least passively) resisted the politically-inspired attempts of the Moscow Patriarchate to have her declared "schismatic" and "uncanonical."

In recent years, the Russian Church Outside of Russia has also given support and recognition to the True Orthodox Christians of Greece, whose situation also has long been exceedingly difficult and misunderstood. In Greece the first blow against the Church (the calendar reform) was not as deadly as the "Declaration" of Metropolitan Sergius in Russia, and for this reason it has taken longer for the theological consciousness of the Orthodox Greek people to see its full anti-orthodox significance. Further, few bishops in Greece have been bold enough to join the movement (whereas, by contrast, the number of non-Sergianist bishops in the beginning was larger than the whole episcopate of the Greek Church). And only in recent years has the cause of the old calendarists become even a little "intellectually respectable," as more and more university graduates have joined it. Over the years it has suffered persecutions, sometimes quite fierce, from the State and the official Church, and to this day it remains disdained by the "sophisticated" and totally without recognition from the "official" Orthodox world. Unfortunately, internal disagreements and divisions have continued to weaken the cause of the old calendarists, and they lack a single unanimous voice to express their stand for patristic Orthodoxy. Still, the basic Orthodoxy of their position cannot be denied, and one can only welcome such sound presentations of it as may be seen in the article that follows.

The increasing realization in recent years of the basic oneness of the cause of True Orthodoxy throughout the world, whether in the Catacomb Church of Russia, the old calendarists of Greece, or the Russian Church Outside of Russia, has led some to think in terms of a "united front" of confessing Churches to oppose the ecumenical movement which has taken possession of "official" Orthodoxy. However, under present conditions this will hardly come to pass; and in any case, this is a "political" view of the situation which sees the significance of the mission of true Orthodoxy in too external a manner. The full dimensions of the True-Orthodox protest against "ecumenical Orthodoxy", against the neutralized, lukewarm Orthodoxy of the apostasy, have yet to be revealed, above all in Russia. But it cannot be that the witness of so many martyrs and confessors and champions of True Orthodoxy in the 20th century will have been in vain. May God preserve His zealots in the royal path of true Orthodoxy, faithful to Him and to His Holy Church until the end of the age!

The MONASTERY of Sts. CYPRIAN and JUSTINA

In Fili, Attica

WITNESS OF TRUE ORTHODOXY IN GREECE

BY ARCHIMANDRITE CYPRIAN

A Letter to the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood from the Abbot of the Monastery, who himself has been subjected to persecution by the State and the Official Church of Greece.

BY GOD'S GRACE, the life of our monastery began in 1961. When I was a young man, in 1951-52, as a result of a very shaking personal event, I made a promise to St. Cyprian, the former magician, with God's help to build him a "house" where I could weep for my sins and call others to repentance,especially young people who were going so much astray. In the meanwhile, I received a great blessing in that Father Philotheos Zervakos,* the abbot of Longovarda monastery on Paros, became my spiritual father, and it was with his blessing that I proceeded to the fulfillment of my promise. Thus, when I had served my time in the army, the present location of the monastery was miraculously found and obtained, and I came to live here on 12th September, 1961, in the first two poor cells, whose foundation we had laid the previous July.

On 7th March, 1962, the first Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the newly-built church, and on 13th June, 1963, my humility first served as a

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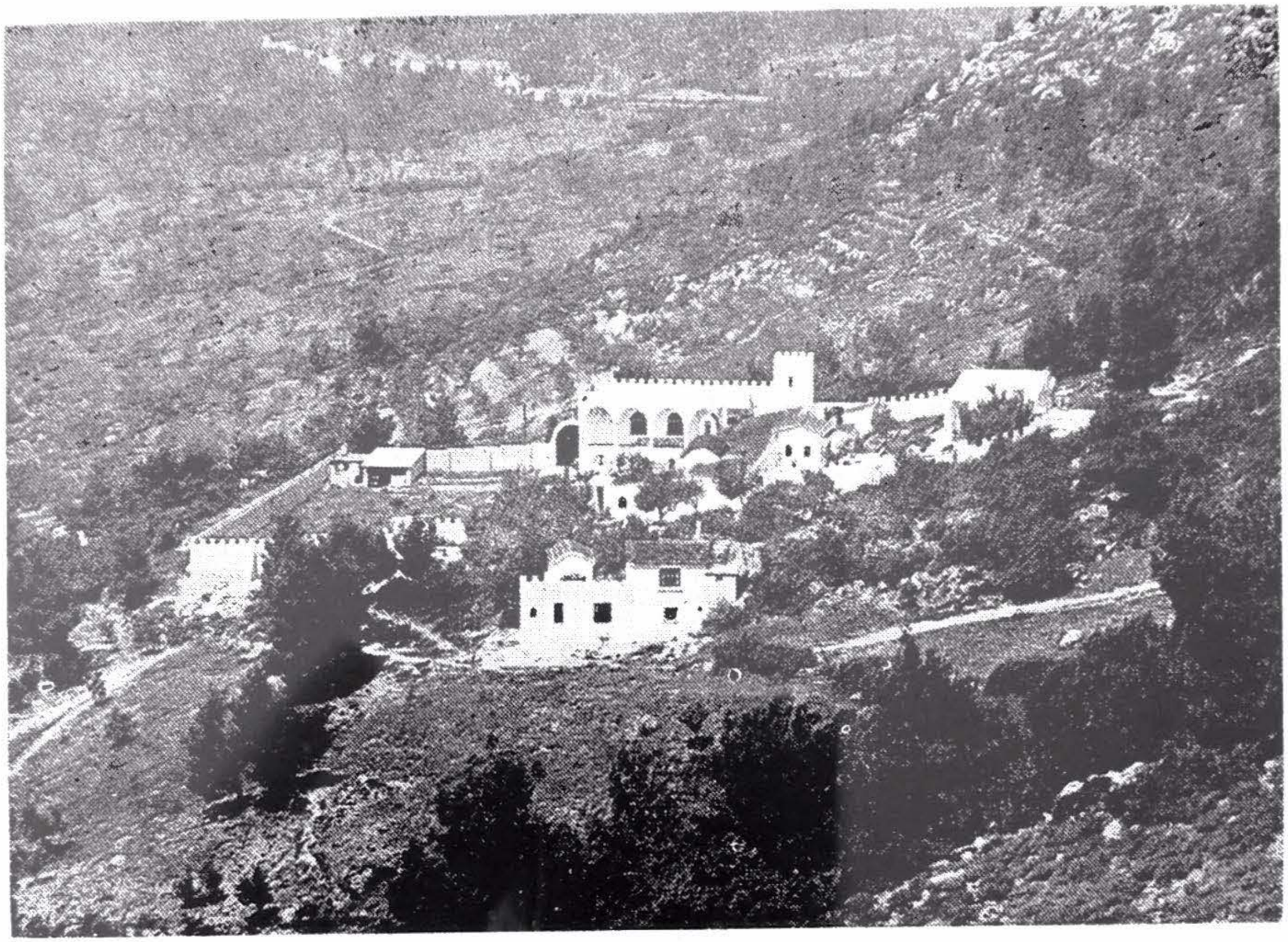
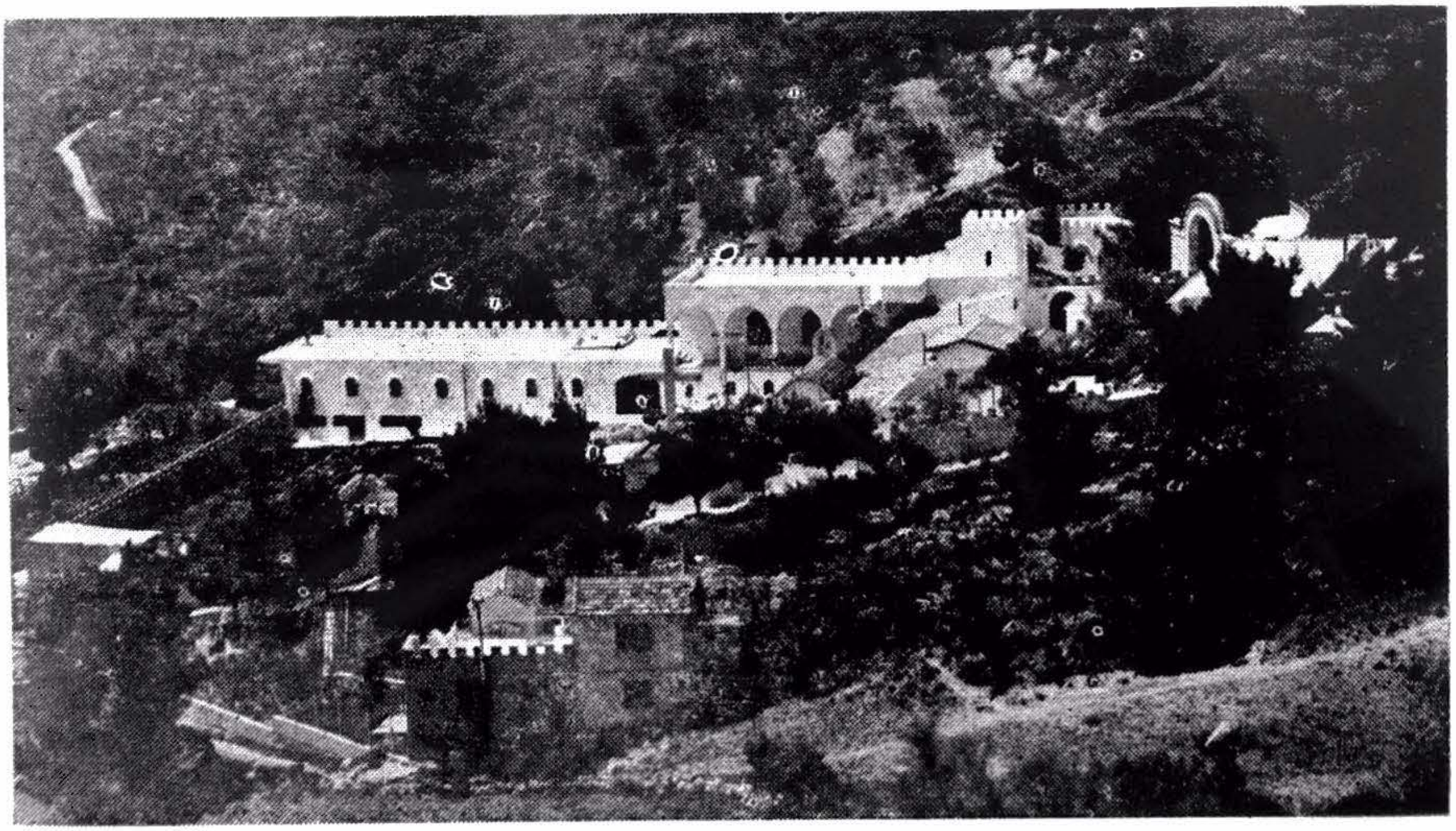
* See *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1968, pages 11-20,



General view of the Monastery



The Monastery from the east (the "Skete" in the foreground)

Archimandrite Cyprian, the Abbot

Monks and novices of the Monastery, September, 1976

priest in the hermitage. I had become a monk of the small habit at Patmos, at the monastery of the Theologian, for to begin with we were a metochion of that historic monastery. As time went on, our little hermitage increased in size as new monks came: In 1967 we were seven or eight monks altogether, and today we are 18. In 1966 we were obliged to become a metochion of the Holy Mountain in order to avoid certain complications with the local bishop. It should be understood that all this time we belonged to the official church and followed the new calendar in our worship, something with which I was not satisfied, for from all that I had heard about them, especially from my elder, I had formed a great sympathy for the old calendarists, believing that they really struggle for the traditions with true zeal and piety. For this reason I wished to belong to them, but certain extreme declarations of theirs concerning the new calendarists had made me hesitate. Finally, starting from the Sunday of Orthodoxy, 1968, we began to observe the old calendar, but without leaving the official church, following in this matter the policy of the Holy Mountain.

In the meanwhile, the reputation of the hermitage was steadily growing; this was due to two factors: the first is the gift which St. Cyprian has for aiding those who suffer from satanic influences and releasing from black magic. Today many who suffer as a result of these demonic arts come to St. Cyprian to find their cure, and thus the flow of pilgrims is ever increasing. The second factor is that our monastery is near the world and people who thirst for spiritual rest come to confess and pray in surroundings which savor of the Tradition of our Church. Many miracles have happened and innumerable souls have confessed and do confess here to the glory of God.

On 9th September, 1967, the main church of the monastery and the side-chapel of St. Nectarios of Pentapolis were consecrated. In August, 1968, we built the chapel of St. Seraphim of Sarov and in 1969 the chapel of St. Gerasimos of Kefallinia. Finally, the enormous flow of pilgrims obliged us in the summer of 1975 to construct the new section of our monastery, consisting of a large church, rooms for receiving guests, a shop for our handicrafts, a confessional and other rooms, so that the faithful can easily be received without disturbing the brothers, who are now free to follow without distraction their monasic regime. The consecration of the new church took place last May on the Sunday of the318 Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. It is worth noting that these new buildings are a great miracle, for they were erected in a very short space of time and under financial and legal conditions which were far from favorable.

THE CHURCH OF THE TRUE ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS

HOWEVER, OUR CONCERN and agony over matters of the faith had not ceased. Thus, when the official church, as represented particularly in the person of Archbishop Ieronymos, the successor of the outstanding and traditionalist Archbishop Chrysostomos,* showed no inclination to oppose the heresy of Ecumenism, which was constantly gaining ground, above all in the completely anti-orthodox actions and statements of Patriarch Athenagoras, we decided we had to leave it and join the Holy Synod of the True Orthodox Christians for reasons purely of faith, following the dictates of the traditions, as expressed especially in the 15th canon of the First and Second Council. This decision was realized by the grace of God, in January, 1969.

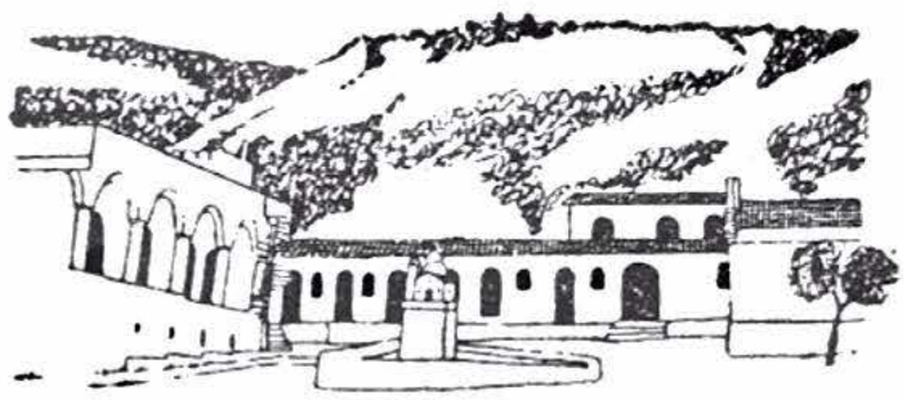
What are the basic aims of the struggles which began in 1924? We have as our example the wondrous patristic and orthodox policy which was set out by the saintly Archbishop Chrysostomos Kavourides (formerly of Florina), the first shepherd of the True Orthodox Christians. This holy hierarch preached and followed faithfully the following line: "We joined the struggle under the flag of the restitution of the Fathers' calendar to the Church, setting as our aim not the creation of a permanent ecclesiastical division, but the pacification of the Church and the unity of all Christians in the celebration of the feasts. When we have restored this flag of orthodox unity to its place, not only will we support the orthodox authority of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Greek Church, which the modernists have unworthily upset, but also we will restrain the extremes to which the calendar struggle has gone, deprived of pastoral supervision and headed by priests who through their lack of theological and canonical education have proceeded to chrismate the children of new calendarists, thereby greatly harming our struggle, and lessening its orthodox authority" (from a letter of Archbishop Chrysostomos to Bishop Germanos Varykopoulos of the Cyclades, Athens, 9th November, 1937).

A SOBER-MINDED ZEALOTRY

UNFORTUNATELY, this orthodox policy is not always followed, for it sometimes happens that godly zeal may turn into an absurd extremism. The "zeal not according to knowledge" has sadly infected some, who we pray will yet return to the royal path; we would like to hear more words of mod-

* See *The Orthodox Word*, July-August, 1968. pages 156-158.

eration. Your introduction to Metropolitan Philaret's letter** made a considerable impression on us, for it is spiritual, deep and discerning. Indeed, some do want everything to be simple and black-or-white: either they have grace or they do not! Either they are heretics or not! However in judging such views it is also necessary to have in mind the extremist attitude of the State (new calendarist) Church, which by official decisions has declared the necessity of re-ordaining our clergy and repeating the marriages of such as go over to them. And when the choice is between the heresy and apostasy of the State Church on the one hand, and certain extremisms on the other, there is no question of where our Orthodox conscience directs us.



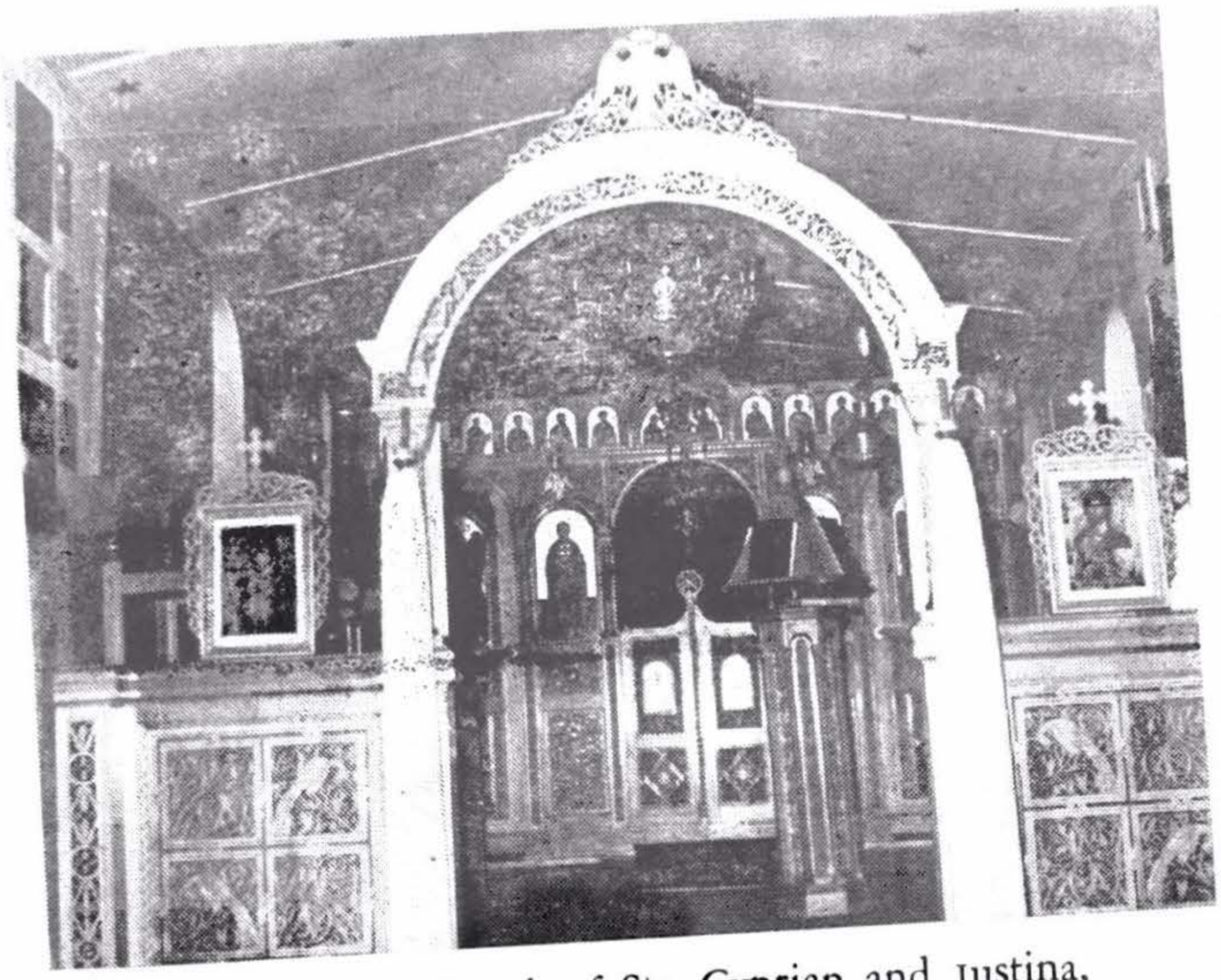
THE LIFE OF THE MONASTERY

IN OUR MONASTERY we venerate especially, apart naturally from our saints, St. Nectarios of Pentapolis, St. Gerasimos of Kefallenia, St. Seraphim of Sarov, St. Demetrios the great-martyr, to whom we have chapels, as also St. Christopher and St. John Kalyvites, to whom are dedicated the side altars of our new church. In Athens we have a metochion with a church of St. Theodore the Studite and a lecture hall. Also, with the grace of our Lord we have founded this year a metochion on the isle of Euboia in honor of St. John the Forerunner (24th June) and on the island of Kalymnos, a hieromonk of the monastery, Fr. Kallinikos, works in a missionary capacity, having created a parish of St. Niketas, a convent and a monastery. A few years ago, with the blessing and constant supervision of the monastery, a convent was begun at Afidne in Attica, dedicated to the Holy Angels, with the most pious mother Kypriane as its abbess. At present we are a metochion of the Athonite monastery of Xenofondos. A few months ago we were found worthy to bring into being a small home for old people close to the monastery, where a few aged ladies rest bodily and spiritually in preparation for their eternal journey to the bosom of our holy forefather Abraham.

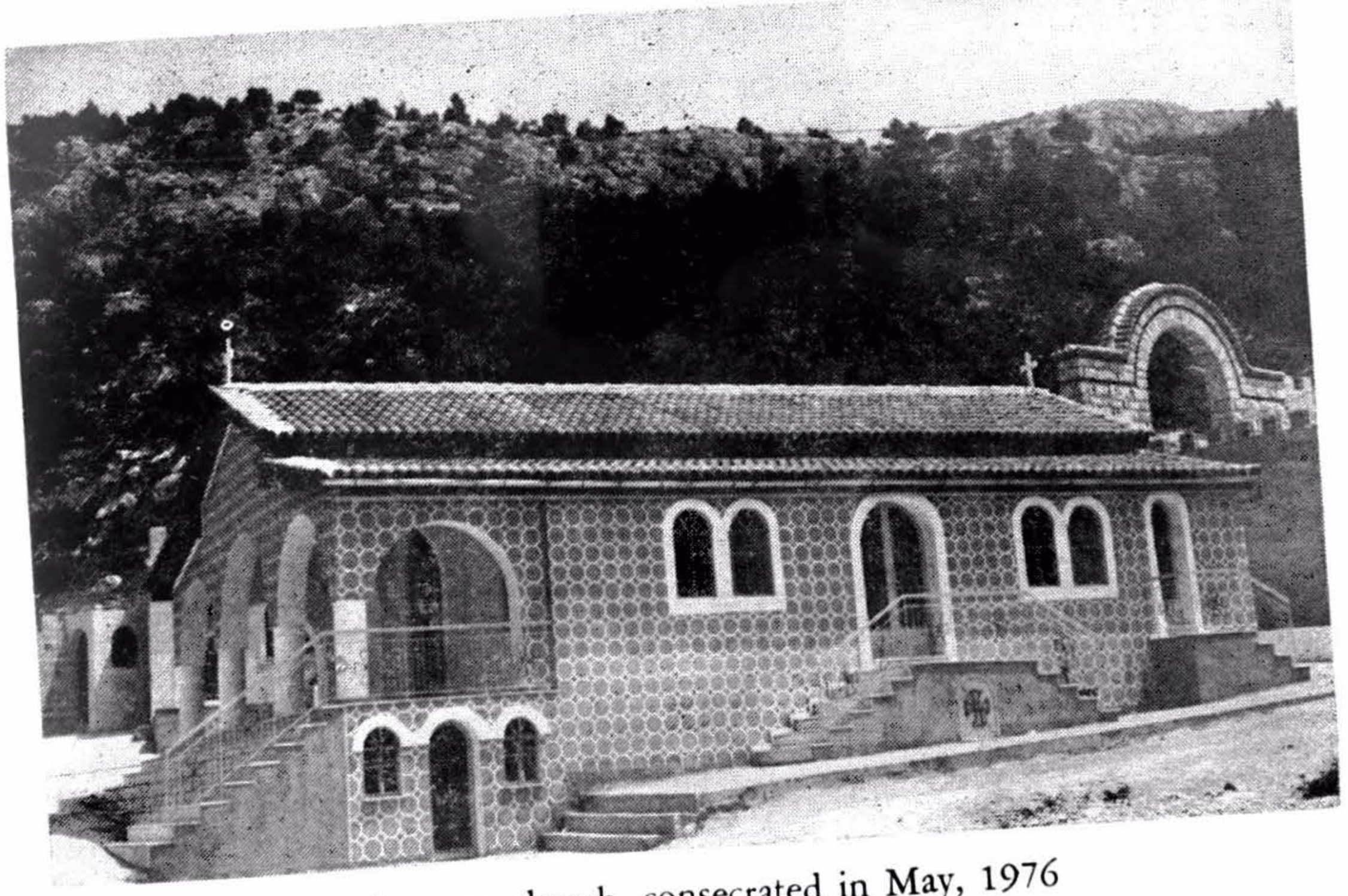
** See *The Orthodox Word*, January-February, 1976, pages 3-5.

Our typicon is as follows: every day we celebrate the Holy Liturgy in the morning; until recently, we celebrated the Liturgy at night, but the flow of the faithful and the toll of exhaustion on the brothers obliged us to make this change, keeping the midnight Liturgy only on Monday night. After the morning Liturgy, there is breakfast on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, and until noon the monks are busy at their obediences. Before the midday meal, the Hours are read, and theTrapeza (main meal) is at twelve noon. A time for study and rest follows, and at 3:15 we say the Ninth Hour and Vespers with the Theotokarion. Afterwards the brothers devote themselves to their obediences again until 6:30 p.m., when we have tea, followed by Compline and Matins, with some reading from a patristic book. When this finishes, the brothers retire to their cells for study and to perform their personal rule of prayer. At five a.m. all will rise. On Sundays and great feast days, the order changes somewhat, for many people come to worship, even from quite large distances, drawn by the contrite monastic prayer to our God. Thus, into the life of the monastery has entered missionary work, with confession, preaching and the publication of spiritual books, including the Life of our patrons, Sts. Cyprian and Justina, the Life of Blessed Xenia of Petersburg, and the Life and Service to St. Herman of Alaska. On Wednesdays after Vespers, we have arranged that there should come those who suffer from demonic influences as a result of black magic, etc., and a paraclisis to our Saints is sung together with the prayers of exorcism. The number of faithful who come for such reasons to our monastery is ever expanding, a fact which demonstrates how much the world suffers in this externally happy age, and also how much echo the voice of our holy Mother the Church finds in their souls.

The monks, being continually revivified by the grace of the Holy Mysteries, struggle with prayer to sanctify the handicraft which they regard as a secondary occupation, while their main task is internal cultivation, and the achievement of the image of God. Prayer joined with silence, the study of the treasures of the Fathers, and sacramental life bring about the longed-for renewal in Christ, and there reigns in the earthly paradise of our monastery love, humility and meekness. Much emphasis is given to the matter of obedience, above all internal obedience, that is, the spiritual unity of spiritual father and disciple; when the monk sincerely loves his elder, respects him, and has unshaken faith that through him God's providence works for his salvation, then he has laid a firm foundation for the building of the radiant structure of his life in Christ. If the monks are spiritually united with their superior,



The Upper Church of Sts. Cyprian and Justina,
where daily services are celebrated



The new church, consecrated in May, 1976

Altar of the Chapel of St. Seraphim of Sarov

(The Antimension on the Holy Table was consecrated by Blessed Archbishop John Maximovitch; in a reliquary are some hairs of St. Seraphim, given by Abbess Elizabeth of London; at right, a photograph of Metropolitan Chrysostomos (†1955), first bishop of the True Orthodox Christians.)

then naturally all will be united one to another in Christ, making up one body whose members work together to the glory of the one God in Trinity, and to the greatest benefit of the Church at large; for good monasteries are the lungs of the Church, with them the Church breathes, and when they are healthy in Christ, then the body is healthy also.

ABOUT VLADIKA John Maximovitch, we had heard much from our friend Fr. Ambroise Fontrier of Paris, and we have always had an especial veneration for him as a new saint of our Church. We have his icon in our church, and this year venerated it with reverence, and commemorated him in a lity after the Liturgy. I hold it as a great honor when I am given the opportunity to praise him and describe his holy feats. We will try with his help to write some hymns to his honor for coming years; for the present we have written a troparion as follows:

Tone 3, "Of Godly Faith."

> Thou didst spread abroad the sweet-smelling myrrh of thy virtues to all the Orthodox, O John, offspring of Russia. Through feats of fasting and prayer thou didst become the prototype of bishops; pray, O Father, to the Trinity to save us from the danger of heresies.

We ask you not to cease praying to God that He should give peace and harmony to His holy local churches, so that all the Orthodox of the world together may glorify His "Honorable and Majestic Name with one mouth and heart."

EPISTLES OF the Council of Bishops

OF THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OUTSIDE OF RUSSIA

September, 1976

THE TRIENNIAL MEETING of the world-wide episcopate of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia took place in New York City from September 16/29 to September 28/October 11, 1976. No important decrees were made, but two significant Epistles were approved, one to the Orthodox Russian people in the Diaspora, and another to the Russian people in the Homeland. Signed by Metropolitan Philaret and 17 bishops, they offer an ideological statement of the position of the Russian Church Outside of Russia in today's world. In their anti-ecumenism and their support for the Catacomb True Orthodox Church of Russia, the documents are virtually unique among Orthodox statements today.

Excerpts are here presented from these documents — rather less than half of the first document, but more than half of the second; the headings have been added by the translators. (Russian texts in *Orthodox Russia,* Oct. 15 and Nov. 1, 1976.)

I. TO THE GOD-BELOVED FLOCK OF THE DIASPORA

THE WORLD TODAY does not present a comforting picture. It becomes ever more difficult to live in this world for any kind of Christian soul that strives to be faithful to Christ and to follow the Gospel of Christ. Despite the dream of those who have become used to looking at everything through rose-colored glasses and expect in the future a change for the better, the darkness over the earth becomes ever thicker, as was prophesied by the clairvoyant ascetics of the last decades. The world clearly and without doubt rolls into the abyss on a sloping surface, ever more speeding up its pace. And sensitive souls already feel the approach of the last times . . . Never has the world experienced what it is experiencing today. Of course, before the world-wide flood, and before the coming to earth and incarnation of the Son of God, the world had become corrupted to the extreme. But what is happening now is incomparably more frightful and ruinous. Then it was the pagan world that became corrupted — and it was saved from spiritual perdition by Christianity, which gave to it rebirth for a new life; but now it is the Christian world that is being corrupted — and what is there that can spiritually give rebirth to it and save it?

It seems, indeed, that never has evil presented itself before mankind in such a hideous, shameless nakedness; never before has it striven so insolently and stubbornly to subject to itself the whole world, the whole human race; and most important, never before has it so cunningly and temptingly put on the mask of good so as *to seduce, if possible, even the elect* (Matt. 24:24).

The holy Apostle Paul in his Epistles has warned that before the approach of the end of the world there will occur the falling away (in Greek, *apostasia).* The world will step away from the Truth, from the Gospel of Christ in the dogmatic realm, and from Christian conceptions in the moral realm; it will be submerged in the abyss of religious errors and ignorance, and likewise of an extreme corruption and the loss of all moral principles and foundations. This apostasy has already begun, it is occurring before our very eyes.

THE TEMPTATION OF ECUMENISM

Children of the Russian Church Outside of Russia! *Look therefore carefully how ye walk* (Eph. 5:15). In the midst of all these temptations, in the

midst of the universal apostasy, guard your faith and your moral purity! One of the most dangerous temptations in the realm of religious errors is the temptation of ecumenism, that is, the teaching that speaks of the union of all beliefs into one, and by the seeming attractiveness of such a proposition draws toward itself an ever greater number of human souls. The ecumenists say that every faith, every confession contains in itself a part of the truth, to which human errors have been added. If all these beliefs will unite together, there will appear the "true church," to which every separate confession will bring its part of the truth, and thus there will be formed the whole truth which this "true church" will possess. It is not difficult to see the falsity of such a proposition, according to which it would seem that the true Church is something that is only being sought, and that at the present time it nowhere exists on earth. But can an Orthodox Christian agree with this?

THE "ONE THING NEEDFUL"

The "one thing needful" is *to make the Church the center* of private and public life. When, in past years, on that part of the earth where now is to be found the monstrous "USSR," there was Holy Russia, a mighty Russia — then the whole life of a Russian man was united with the teaching of the Church and the life of the Church. The simple Russian people measured the whole yearly course of their life not by the seasons of the year, but by the great church feasts. In the Orthodox Russian family the pastor of the church was not only a dear, welcome and frequent guest; he was precisely a spiritual father and instructor, whose voice and counsel had an absolutely special and sometimes entirely decisive significance for the resolution of the problems of life. To such a life wherein the Church is the center we call you, our beloved children, our flock entrusted to us by God.

Here one must make a qualification and note that the negative manifestations spoken of above — that is, the spread of the anti-orthodox ideology of ecumenism and the frightful decline of morals — refer chiefly to the life of the non-Orthodox environment which now surrounds our Orthodox flock, which is scattered "over the face of the whole earth." The flock itself has only in part been touched by these corrupting, anti-orthodox and perverting manifestations. But they do exist, and unfortunately their activity becomes more and more noticeable. And in order to show a sufficiently powerful resistance and to place them against the bright Orthodox ideology and sound moral principles, probably the very best means is the direction of the whole life of our flock

according to a strictly churchly, strictly Orthodox path — in other words, *making the Church the center of life.*

THE CHURCH IN RUSSIA

Our Russian Church Outside of Russia, as is well known, is a part of the Russian Mother Church, its free part. Although we, in accordance with the testament of the ever-memorable, Most Blessed Metropolitan Anastassy, have no communion with the Soviet Patriarchate, we have never broken off with the Russian Church, our Mother Church. Therefore, the needs of the Russian Church are our needs, and the needs of our brethern who live under the heavy yoke of the God-hating regime are our needs. The believing people in our Homeland now are in extreme need of spiritual food, religious, moral and instructive literature, and it is our duty to help them in this.

(The Epistle ends with an appeal to support the work of the organization "Orthodox Action" in sending Orthodox literature to Russia.)

II. TO THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE IN THE HOMELAND

NOT EASY is our path outside the boundaries of Russia. Those same atheists who are your whip do not leave us in peace eihter, through their secret agents and helpers abroad who act by means of lying and slander. Visiting the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchates or participating in the sessions of the Committee on Human Rights, at the assemblies of international organizations and the World Council of Churches, and at the Vatican, they use all efforts so as to overthrow our proofs concerning the rightlessness of believers in Russia.

Despite all this, we strive to go on the straight path shown to us by the founder of our church, Metropolitan Anthony of Kiev and his successor, Metropolitan Anastassy, although in this we are alone, even among the Orthodox. Never has the voice of our chief hierarchs been silent in defense of the Russian Church and the Russian people. But the alarm bell of our church up until now has not awakened the conscience of many.

Despite the efforts of militant atheism and the favorable conditions for them in the world, we know that Christ is unconquerable. Being persecuted, He cannot be uprooted from the hearts of men. "Who will separate us from the

love of God," said the Apostle. "This is the victory which conquers the world, our Faith," said, and say, the Martyrs. Let our consolation be the words of the Saviour: "Blessed are ye when men shall reproach you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake."

This is why we wish to say to you:

TO THE CATACOMB CHURCH

Rejoice and be glad, new unconquerable martyrs of Russia, Metropolitans Peter, Cyril, Joseph and the millions martyred with you who now stand at the Throne of the Lord of Glory and pray for us! Be glad and rejoice, you who are alive now, invincible confessors of the Faith of Christ! We reverently bow down before your exploit and say to you as younger brothers: You are the light of the contemporary world which has gone astray in lies and sin; you are the salt of the earth; you are those "ten righteous ones" for whose sake the Lord endures our sins; you are the conquerors of him who brazenly thinks that all the kingdoms of the world and their glory are his, but he cannot conquer you! You are his ruin, but our hope, our glory, our victory!

We are in awe before your exploit, pastors of the contemporary Russian catacombs, pastors who have not sought legalization, who perform your service secretly from the prince of this world, with the blessing of your courageous hierarchs! You, O fathers and teachers, serve for us as a living example of uncompromisingness and courage! May God be your help!

TO PRIESTS OF THE MOSCOW PATRIARCHATE

We kiss the Cross which you also have taken upon yourself, O pastors who have found the courage and the power of spirit to be open accusers of the faintheartedness of your hierarchs who have capitulated to the atheists, to be fearless gatherers and instructors of those who seek spiritual food — first of all, young people. We know of your exploit, we read about you, we read what you have written, we pray for you and ask your prayers for our flock in the Diaspora. Christ is in our midst! He is and shall be!

THE SPIRITUAL REVIVAL IN RUSSIA

The life of the Church continues even under the pressure of atheiem, often taking, thanks to the pressure and violence, forms unusual in peaceful circumstances, breaking out through the bonds and chains into the freedom of spirit and the victory of the children of God!

With love we follow this process in our Homeland and rejoice over it.

EPISTLES OF THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

We know how difficult it is especially for young people, to find Christ after the atheist upbringing they have received in school. This is why they often waver between Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and the sects. But Prince Vladimir, who renounced paganism at the end of the tenth century, did not waver. He became Orthodox, finding in Orthodoxy the true Faith, and he placed Russia upon the historical Orthodox path. We believe that if you will seek the truth freely, sincerely and honestly, you will go on his path.

THE PERIL OF ECUMENISM AND HETERODOXY

We know that among you some are attracted by so-called "ecumenism." We fully understand that the rightless and persecuted want to feel the support of a neighbor, of someone who is also a believer, even though in some other way. Against this one cannot object . . . But even under the best of mutual relations, there is still a boundary which an Orthodox Christian cannot cross, where the "holy of holies" of the true Faith begins. Here is what St. John of Kronstadt said in this regard eighty years ago: "In many Orthodox Christians the true Faith has been converted into indifference, indifference with regard to any faith, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish, Moslem, and even paganism. We hear that in every faith one can please God, that is, as if every faith were equally pleasing to God, and as if lying and truth, righteousness and unrighteousness can be indifferent for God."

We have good relations with the representatives of various confessions, but this does not mean that we are indifferent to the truths of the holy Faith. We not only strive ourselves to preserve this truth, but we bear it to those non-Orthodox who surround us, who often become zealous Orthodox. It is not for nothing that the Lord has dispersed us in the midst of all the peoples of the earth!

Seeking something that seems to them orderly, powerful, mighty and numerous, some believers among you think to find this in Roman Catholicism, and thus seek in "Papism" a refuge for their hopes. We know that Catholic-Uniate literature is being directed to you and, falling into the hands of the Orthodox, disturbs them.

But it is our duty to warn you that Roman Catholicism at the present time is undergoing a frightful crisis . . . It would have been impossible 20 or 30 years ago to imagine that spiritual chaos into which Roman Catholicism has now come, as we observed at the Vatican Council.

From one remote corner of Russia people write to us: "We live here under a barrage of sectarian literature," while Orthodox literature is impossible

to obtain . . . In the absence of Orthodox literature, when believers grasp for any kind of spiritual book as a hungry man for food, without discrimination or full understanding of the truth, it is easy for there to arise a false understanding of it, any kind of error, any kind of sectarianism. But each of you has not only a mind, which can easily go astray, but also a heart which, according to the word of our Saviour, if it is pure, can help a man to understand God — Truth. Let the heart prompt the one in error and say that the age-old path of the Russian people was the Orthodox path, the path on which from the beginning the Holy Apostles went, and the great Hierarchs Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, St. Nicholas of Myra, and a multitude of others, and all the Russian Saints. And if the sects appeared not earlier than the 16th or even the 17th century and later, let us ask: where was the true Church, established by Christ the Saviour, before their appearance, that is, before the 16th century?

TO THE ATHEISTS

We wish also to address you, those who do not believe in God, who do not fear Him, to the active persecutors of Christians. "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest. It is difficult for thee to go against the goad." Thus the Lord spoke to one persecutor of Christians, who later became His faithful disciple, the great Apostle Paul.

We wish to say the same to you! Already now for over fifty years you have striven to uproot Christ from the souls and hearts of men. The opportunities for this in your atheist State are unlimited. You use gigantic efforts in the battle against Christianity, and what have you accomplished? You yourselves complain that the believers cannot be uprooted, and that the battle against them is very difficult . . . "It is difficult for you to go against the goad," in the desire to annihilate what has been placed by God in the very nature of man, that is, faith in Him! The day and the hour will come for each of you, when you will say together with Julian the Apostate, "Thou hast conquered me, O Galilean!" And so that the hour of your enlightenment and salvation might come quickly, the faithful pray thus, "Remember, O Lord, all our enemies who hate us and offend us . . . and to those who have gone away from Thee and do not seek Thee may Thou be manifest, so that not one of them may perish, but all may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (From the Prayer read at every Liturgy celebrated in the Russian Church Outside of Russia.)

(*Continued from page* 142)

upon herself yet a more powerful labor: she clothed herself in a hair shirt and mortified her flesh with abstinence and fasting, eating only bread and water. Having thus tamed the passions of her flesh, Justina conquered the devil and banished him with shame. And he, like the first one, returned to Cyprian without accomplishing anything.

Then Cyprian called one of the princes of the demons, informed him about the weakness of the demons he had sent, who could not conquer a single maiden, and asked help from him. This prince of demons severely reproached the other demons for their lack of skill in this matter and for their inability to arouse passion in the heart of the naiden. Having given hope to Cyprian and promised to seduce the maiden by other means, he took on the appearance of a woman and went to Justina. And he began to converse piously with her, as if desiring to follow the example of her virtuous life and her chastity. Conversing in this way, he asked the maiden what kind of reward there might be for such a strict life and for the preservation of purity.

Justina replied that the reward for those who live in chastity is great and beyond words, and that it is very remarkable that people do not in the least concern themselves for such a great treasure as angelic purity. Then the devil, revealing his shamelessness, began with cunning words to tempt her, saying: "But then how could the world exist? How would people be born? After all, if Eve had preserved her purity, how would the human race have increased? In truth marriage is a good thing, being established by God Himself; the Sacred Scripture also praises it, saying: *Let marriage be had in honor among all, and the bed undefiled (Heb. 13:4).* And many saints of God also—did they not enter into marriage, which God gave them as a consolation, so that they might rejoice in their children and praise God?"

Hearing these words, Justina recognized the cunning deceiver, the devil, and, more skillful than Eve, conquered him. Without continuing this conversation, she immediately fled to the defense of the Cross of the Lord and placed its honorable sign on her forehead; and her heart she turned to Christ her Bridegroom. And the devil immediately vanished with yet greater shame than the first two demons.

In great disturbance, the proud prince of the demons returned to Cyprian, who, finding out that he had not managed to do anything, said to him: "Can it be that even you, a prince powerful and more skillful than others

in such matters, could not conquer the maiden? Who then among you can do anything with this unconquerable maiden's heart? Tell me by what weapon she battles with you, and how she makes powerless your mighty power?"

Being conquered by the power of God, the devil unwillingly acknowledged: "We cannot behold the sign of the Cross, but flee from it, because it scorches us like fire and banishes us far away."

Cyprian became angry at the devil because he had put him to shame, and reproaching the demon, he said: "Such is your power that even a weak virgin conquers you!"

Then the devil, desiring to console Cyprian, attempted yet another undertaking: he took on the form of Justina and went to Aglaias with the hope that, having taken him for the real Justina, the youth might satisfy his desire, and thus neither would the weakness of the demons be revealed, nor would Cyprian be put to shame. And behold, when the demon went to Aglaias in the form of Justina, the youth leaped up in unspeakable joy, ran to the false maiden, embraced her and began kissing her, saying: "How good it is that you have come to me, fair Justina!"

But no sooner had the youth pronounced the word "Justina" than the demon immediately disappeared, being unable to bear even the name of Justina. The youth became greatly afraid and, running to Cyprian, told him what had happened. Then Cyprian by his sorcery gave him the form of a bird and, having enabled him to fly in the air, he sent him to the house of Justina, advising him to fly into her room through the window. Being carried by a demon in the air, Aglaias flew on the roof. At this time Justina happened to look through the window of her room. Seeing her, the demon left Aglaias and fled. At the same time, the phantom appearance of Aglaias also vanished, and the youth, falling down, was all but dashed to pieces. He grasped the edge of the roof with his hands and, holding on to it, hung there; and if he had not been let down to the ground by the prayer of St. Justina, the impious one would have fallen down and been killed.

Thus, having achieved nothing, the youth returned to Cyprian and told him of his woe. Seeing himself put to shame, Cyprian was greatly grieved and thought himself of going to Justina, trusting in the power of his sorcery. He turned himself into a woman and into a bird, but he did not manage to reach as far as the door of the house of Justina before his false appearances disappeared, and he returned with sorrow.

AFTER THIS CYPRIAN began to gain revenge for his shame, and by his sorcery he brought diverse misfortunes on the house of Justina and on the houses of all her relatives, neighbors and friends, as once the devil had done to righteous Job (Job 1:15-19, 2:7). He killed their animals, he struck down their slaves with plagues, and in this way he brought them to extreme grief. Finally, he struck with illness Justina herself, so that she lay in bed and her mother wept over her. Justina, however, comforted her mother with the words of the Prophet David: *I shall not die, but live, and I shall tell of the works of the Lord* (Psalm 117:17).

Not only on Justina and her relatives, but also on the whole city, by God's allowance, did Cyprian bring misfortune as a result of his untamable rage and his great shame. Plagues appeared in the animals and various diseases among men; and the rumor spread, through the activity of the demons, that the great sorcerer Cyprian was punishing the city for Justina's opposition to him. Then the most honorable citizens went to Justina and with anger tried to persuade her not to grieve Cyprian any longer, and to become the wife of Aglaias, in order to escape yet greater misfortunes for the whole city because of her. But she calmed them by saying that soon all the misfortunes which had been brought about with the help of Cyprian's demons would cease. And so it happened. When St. Justina prayed fervently to God, immediately all the demonic attacks ceased; all were healed from the plagues and recovered from their diseases. When such a change occurred, the people glorified Christ and mocked Cyprian and his sorcerer's cunning, so that from shame he could not show himself among men and he avoided meeting even friends.

Having become convinced that nothing could conquer the power of the sign of the cross and the name of Christ, Cyprian came to his senses and said to the devil: "O destroyer and deceiver of all, source of every impurity and defilement! Now I have discovered your infirmity. For if you fear even the shadow of the cross and tremble at the name of Christ, then what will you do when Christ Himself comes to you? If you cannot conquer those who sign themselves with the sign of the cross, then whom will you tear away from the hands of Christ? Now I have understood what a non-entity you are; you are not even able to take revenge! Listening to you, I, wretched one, have been deceived, and I believed your tricks. Depart from me, accursed one, depart! For I must entreat the Christians that they might have mercy on me. I must appeal to pious people, that they might deliver me from perdition and be con-

cerned over my salvation. Depart, depart from me, lawless one, enemy of truth, adversary and hater of every good thing!"

Having heard this, the devil threw himself on Cyprian in order to kill him; attacking him, he began to beat and strangle him. Finding no defense anywhere, and not knowing how to help himself and be delivered from the fierce hands of the demon, Cyprian, already scarcely alive, remembered the sign of the cross, by the power of which Justina had opposed all the demons' power, and he cried out: "O God of Justina, help me!"

Then, raising his hand, he made the sign of the cross, and the devil immediately leaped away from him like an arrow shot from a bow. Gaining courage, Cyprian became bolder, and calling on the name of Christ, he signed himself with the sign of the cross and stubbornly opposed the demon, cursing and reproaching him. As for the devil, standing far away from him and not daring to draw near to him out of fear of the sign of the cross and the name of Christ, he threatened Cyprian in every manner, saying: "Christ will not deliver you out of my hands!" Then, after long and fierce attacks on Cyprian, the demon roared like a lion and went away.

THEN CYPRIAN took all his books of magic and went to the Christian Bishop Anthimus. Falling to the feet of the Bishop, he entreated him to have mercy on him and to give him holy Baptism. Knowing that Cyprian was a great sorcerer, feared by all, the Bishop thought that he had come to him with some kind of trick, and therefore he refused him, saying: "You do much evil among the pagans; leave the Christians in peace, lest you speedily perish." Then Cyprian with tears confessed everything to the Bishop and gave him his books to be burned. Seeing his humility, the Bishop instructed him and taught him the holy faith, and then commanded him to prepare for Baptism; and his books he burned before all the believing citizens.

Leaving the Bishop with a contrite heart, Cyprian wept over his sins, sprinkled ashes on his head, and sincerely repented, calling out to the true God for the cleansing of his iniquities. Coming the next day to church, he heard the word of God with joyful emotion, standing among the believers. And when the deacon commanded the catechumens to go out, declaring: "Ye catechumens depart," and certain ones were already going out, Cyprian did not wish to go out, saying to the deacon: "I am a slave of Christ; do not chase me out of here." But the deacon said to him: "Since you have not yet been given holy Baptism, you must go out of the church."

To this Cyprian replied: "As Christ my God liveth, Who has delivered me from the devil, Who has preserved the maiden Justina pure, and has had mercy on me—you will not chase me out of the church until I become a complete Christian."

The deacon related this to the Bishop, and the Bishop, seeing the fervor of Cyprian and his devotion to the faith of Christ, called him up and immediately baptized him in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Finding out about this, St. Justina gave thanks to God, distributed much alms to the poor, and made an offering in church. And Cyprian, on the eighth day after his Baptism, was made a reader by the Bishop; on the twentieth day he was made subdeacon, and on the thirtieth day a deacon; and in a year he was ordained priest. Cyprian completely changed his life; with every day he increased his struggles, and constantly weeping over his previous evil deeds, he perfected himself and ascended from virtue to virtue. Soon he was made Bishop, and in this rank he led such a holy life that he equalled many great saints. At the same time he zealously took care of the flock of Christ which had been entrusted to him. St. Justina the maiden he made a deaconess, and then entrusted to her a convent, making her abbess over other Christian maidens. By his conduct and instruction he converted many pagans and acquired them for the Church of Christ. Thus, idol worship began to die out in that land, and the glory of Christ increased.

Seeing the strict life of St. Cyprian, his concern for the faith of Christ and for the salvation of human souls, the devil ground his teeth against him and inspired the pagans to slander him before the governor of the eastern region, saying that he had put the gods to shame, had converted many people away from them, and was glorifying Christ, Who was hostile to their gods. And so, many impious ones came to the governor Eutolmius, who was then governing those regions, and made slanders against Cyprian and Justina, accusing them of being hostile to their gods and to the emperor and to all authorities, saying that they were disturbing the people, deceiving them, and leading them in their footsteps, disposing them to worship the crucified Christ. At the same time they asked the governor to give Cyprian and Justina over to death for this. Having heard their request, Eutolmius commanded that Cyprian and Justina be seized and placed in prison. Then, setting out for Damascus, he took them with him in order to make judgment upon them.

ST. CYPRIAN
THE FORMER SORCERER

And when they had brought the prisoners of Christ, Cyprian and Justina, to him, he asked Cyprian: "Why have you changed your earlier glorious way of life, when you were a renowned servant of the gods and brought many people to them?"

St. Cyprian related to the governor how he had found out the infirmity and the deception of the demons and come to understand the power of Christ, which the demons feared and before which they trembled, disappearing from before the sign of the precious cross; and likewise he explained the reason for his conversion to Christ, for Whom he declared his readiness to die. The torturer did not accept the words of Cyprian in his heart, but being unable to reply to them, he commanded that the Saint be hung up and his body scraped, and that St. Justina be beaten on the mouth and eyes. For the whole time of the long torments they ceaselessly confessed Christ and endured everything with thanksgiving. Then the torturer imprisoned them and strove by kind exhortation to return them to idol worship. When he was unable to convince them, he commanded that they be thrown into a cauldron; but the boiling cauldron did not cause them any harm, and they glorified God as if they were in some cool place. Seeing this, one priest of the idols, by name Athanasius, said: "In the name of the god Aesculapius, I also will throw myself into this fire and put to shame those sorcerers." But hardly had the fire touched him than he immediately died.

Seeing this, the torturer became frightened, and not desiring to judge them further, he sent the martyrs to the governor Claudius in Nicomedia, describing all that had happened to them. This governor condemned them to be beheaded with the sword. When they were brought to the place of

execution, Cyprian asked a little time for prayer, so that Justina might be executed first; he feared that Justina would become frightened at the sight of his death. But she joyfully bent her head under the sword and departed unto her Bridegroom Christ. Seeing the innocent death of these martyrs, a certain Theoctistus, who was present there, greatly pitied them and, being inflamed in his heart towards God, he fell down to St. Cyprian and, kissing him, declared himself a Christian. Together with Cyprian he also was immediately condemned to be beheaded.

Thus they gave over their souls into the hands of God; their bodies, however, lay for six days unburied. Certain of the strangers who were there secretly took them and brought them to Rome, where they gave them to a certain virtuous and holy woman whose name was Rufina, a relative of Claudius Caesar. She buried with honor the bodies of the holy martyrs of Christ: Cyprian, Justina, and Theoctistus. At their graves many healings occurred for those who came to them with faith. (Their martyrdoms occurred toward the end of the third century—according to some, in about the year 268, but according to others, in 304.)

By their prayers may the Lord heal also our afflictions of body and soul! Amen.

SOME MIRACLES OF SAINTS CYPRIAN AND JUSTINA

In 19th-Century Russia

The devout maiden R. was subjected to the same temptation as was once the holy Martyr Justina: she was pursued by a certain man who, seeing that all his efforts to arouse in her a mutual love for him remained futile, turned to a sorcerer, and with his help began to direct magic spells against her. Being forewarned about this through a faithful servant-woman, and beginning to feel in herself the action of the enemy's power, this maiden had no one from whom to seek help except God, for she had no acquaintance with anyone of spiritual life. One night the above-mentioned servant-woman saw a dream wherein a tall monk entered her lady's room and led her out in a monastic garment. Soon after this, Elder Anthony of Optina visited this family, although he had not known them before. In this important visit was clearly expressed the providence of God for this family, as well as the manifest activity of demons . . . When he entered the house (as he later wrote this maiden), "at first I encountered a whole crowd of demons who with abusive language forbade me to enter, but the Lord drove them away . . . Even though I did not know the history of your

Optina Elder
Abbot Anthony

last two years, it was not for nothing that I advised you to pray to the holy Martyr Justina the virgin, for your situation then was very similar to hers, as I recently found out, and with my whole soul I thank God with tears that your holy soul has been delivered from the nets which had caught it!" The servant-woman, when she saw Father Anthony, recognized that it was precisely he that she had seen in her dream.

The Elder understood that the only salvation for this maiden was to go to a convent. But her relatives did not wish even to hear of this, and Father Anthony did not find it possible or profitable to persuade them; and therefore he only prayed for her deliverance from the enemy's nets that surrounded her, and by his letters strengthened her in her torment from the invisible power of demons, which had been brought against her by the sorcerer . . . By the prayers of Father Anthony, R's mother unexpectedly gave her consent for her to enter a convent . . . However, the sorcerer boasted that he would drag her even out of the convent. And indeed, the young novice continued to feel within herself the action of the enemy's power, having repose neither day nor night; and again she found strength in the prayers and counsel of Father Anthony. The young sufferer received final deliverance from the temptation of the enemy that tormented her through the prayers of the great contemporary hierarch, now reposed, Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow. Once he appeared to her in a dream, read the 60th Psalm, ordered her to repeat after him all the verses of it, and then gave her the command to read this Psalm daily. On awakening, she felt

Metropolitan Philaret
of Moscow

that the temptation which had been tormenting her for many years had completely departed from her.

(Elder Anthony concludes his letter to this maiden, who was then still suffering the effects of her experience:) "Be full of hope. You and I, even lying flat in bed, will be saved by the prayers of the saints for us; for if the prayer of even a single saint can give much help, then when all the saints start to pray for us, without any doubt the Kingdom of Heaven will be ours!" (Translated from Hieromonk Clement Sederholm, *Optina Elder Anthony,* St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1973, pp. 100-103, and *The Letters of Abbot Anthony,* Optina edition, 1869, pp. 381-2.)

In 20th-century Greece

From the time when, by the grace of God, our monastery was founded in 1961, our protectors, Saints Cyprian and Justina, have worked many miracles through their intercession, especially for those suffering from satanic influence or the effects of black magic.

A few years ago, after the Sunday Liturgy, while the abbot was still in the altar taking off his vestments, a young man, about 30 years old, came to one of the side doors of the iconostasis and in tears said: "Father, save me, help, my home is falling apart. I have been married 25 days now, but they have done something to me and I can't get close to my wife. We live as brother and sister,

and now we're so much in the hold of nerves and quarrelling, that if it continues, we will separate."

The abbot tried to calm him, and advised him that when he and his wife had repented of their sins, they should confess, and after fasting three days, they should come to the monastery so that a Vigil and Divine Liturgy could be served in their name.

They did as instructed, prepared and came; the Vigil was celebrated and prayers of exorcism were read over them, and in the morning they left for home. Next Sunday the young man came to the monastery again, but this time full of joy, and he told with great emotion what had happened. "When we left here on Thursday morning, we returned home and found my father very disturbed. When I asked him what was wrong, he said: 'Something fearful happened last night. While I was sleeping, there appeared before me a tall old man with grey hair and beard, who woke me up and said: "Get up, my child, and dig there (he showed me the exact place) to find your son's magic charm." After that he disappeared. I was so frightened that I stayed in bed waiting for it to get light.'" (It is evident that the tall old man who appeared was St. Cyprian, who went, while the Vigil was being celebrated and the prayers being read, to the couple's house to reveal to his father this demonic business.)

The young man continued: "I asked my father where the old man told him to dig. He showed me, and forty centimeters down I found these strange things." He gave the abbot a white handkerchief with a large knot, which proved when opened to contain the dust of a dead body and the couple's initials. Exorcisms were read over it, and the young man left again. Two days later the abbot saw an old woman kneeling and weeping before the icon of St. Cyprian and St. Justina. When asked what had happened, she replied that she was the mother of the young man from Aspopyrgo, and from the day they had come to the monastery, they had been completely well, and were living in great happiness. She had come to thank the Saints, full of gratitude for the great gift they had given. (By Archimandrite Cyprian of the Monastery of Sts. Cyprian and Justina; translation first published in *The Old Calendarist*, monthly publication of the St. George Information Service, London, England, June, 1975.)